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ABSTRACT

This document briefly reviews the educational system in Tasmania (Australia). It outlines particular programs from primary to postsecondary education, emphasizing the goal of individual student development. Photographs accompany many of the program descriptions. (DB)

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TASMANIA
Excellence in Education

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Department of Education and The Arts

TASMANIA– EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION

Education is a life-long experience. In Tasmania the education system aims to meet the community's needs by making flexible provisions and encouraging excellence. Tasmanian education builds on the assumption that every student has talent and that we have a responsibility to help students identify their talents and develop them.

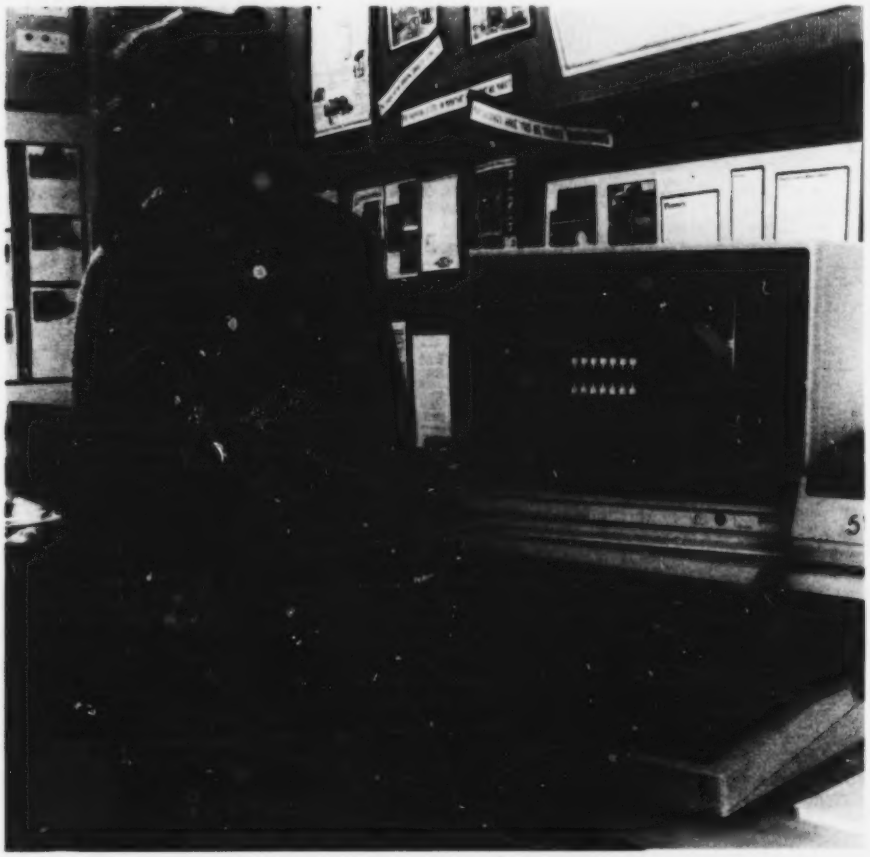
Most Tasmanian primary schools have fewer than 600 pupils. The schools use programs that are designed to cater for the intellectual, physical, social and emotional development of children. Children begin preparatory classes at the age of 5, and move into year 1 when they are between 5½ and 6. Most schools have six grades as well as kindergarten and preparatory classes.

Students begin secondary classes when they are between 11½ and 13 years of age. All high schools except two in Hobart are co-educational, and all provide four years of secondary education.

Emphasis during the first two years (years 7 and 8) is on general, comprehensive education. In years 9 and 10 students choose from a range of academic, technical and cultural subjects that allows them to follow personal interests while satisfying the requirements of the Schools Board of Tasmania.

Students are encouraged to pursue studies beyond year 10, and senior secondary colleges, pioneered in Tasmania, have boosted the number of students staying on at school. Students sit for Higher School Certificate subjects in years 11 and 12. Matriculation is determined by the University of Tasmania from results of Higher School Certificate assessments conducted by the Schools Board of Tasmania.

From the beginning of 1990, a new Tasmanian Certificate of Education is being phased in to replace the two existing certificates. The TCE will be issued to each student whenever he or she leaves school, and will reflect new approaches to the assessment of students' performance.



TASNET, the Education Department's state-wide computer network, has over 600 access points throughout the state, with almost all schools and colleges connected. Several Tasmanian schools use 'electronic mail' to communicate with others overseas.

Tasmania's educational computing services and software products are sold and used quite extensively interstate and in other countries.

The Department also operates a Science Equipment Centre in Hobart to design, manufacture and repair high-precision instruments and equipment.

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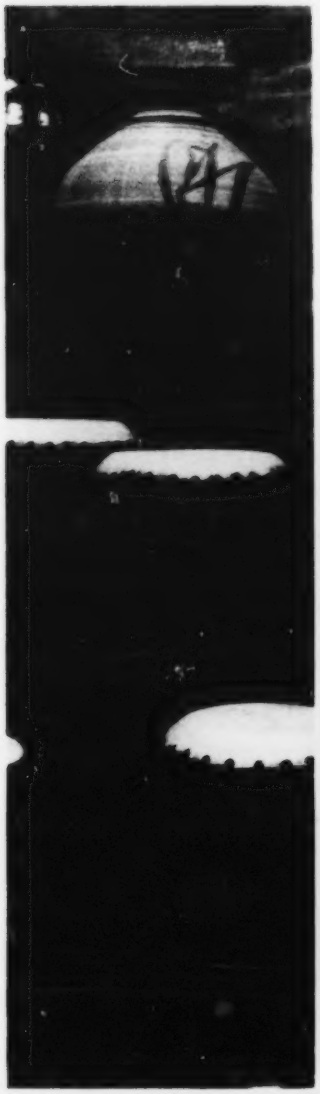

The arts have an important place at all levels of education in Tasmania. From the early childhood level, where Tasmania recently headed a project of national significance, to the adult education level, where demand for arts and crafts courses surpasses all others, the range of experiences available is enormous.

Tasmanian-developed guidelines for drama teaching are in use interstate and overseas, including the UK and Japan.

While high achievers are encouraged, we assume that every student has something that he or she can do well, and that we have an important responsibility to help individuals identify those things and develop their potential.

Whether the talent is in sporting, academic or artistic pursuits, specialist centres exist to promote the development of excellence. Most of the centres provide resources for teachers and parents, and facilities for them to develop materials and programs to stimulate students.

A priority in Tasmania is the pursuit of ways to integrate students with special needs into mainstream education; to provide them with a comprehensive education; and to maximise their educational opportunities.

Specially designed equipment helps to overcome difficulties in many areas. For example, computer hardware which was developed in Tasmania assists students with physical disabilities to control keyboard operations, and greatly enhances their capacity to communicate.

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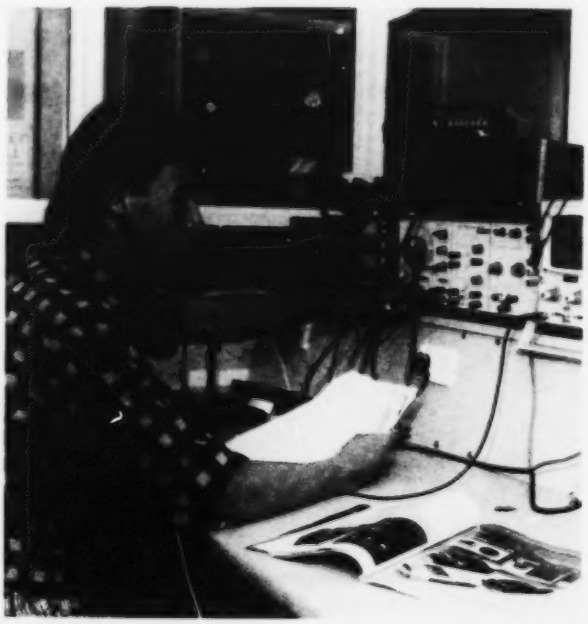
The encouragement of enterprise and entrepreneurship in students, and fostering an awareness and understanding of new technology, are both areas of growing emphasis in school and college programs.

In both cases, the intention is to provide students with skills and attitudes that are of direct practical relevance to their future lives.

A diverse range of student run mini-enterprise projects operates in fields including agriculture and horticulture, tourism and hospitality, small business operation, careers education, sports administration, media, computing and music.

In technological fields, computer-aided machine tools and drafting equipment are increasingly familiar in workshops; while projects involving high-level skills in photographics, electronics, information technology, science research, thermal efficiency and aerodynamics, to name a few examples, are becoming common at secondary levels as well as TAFE.



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Tasmania has World Heritage wilderness and rainforest; predominantly a farming, timber and mining background; some of the most colourful history in Australia; and the cleanest air in the world. Small wonder that the environment plays such an important part in the education of our young people. Specialist study centres located around the state introduce students to various aspects of our natural and human environment.

The centres provide opportunities for students to examine subjects as diverse as marine life and technology, oceanography, plant and animal life, geology, colonial and convict history, country life, farm skills, and cottage industries of the past and present.

Other centres provide outdoor education in recreational pursuits. Skills are taught by experts in a variety of activities ranging from kayaking to rock climbing, trout fishing to tin panning.

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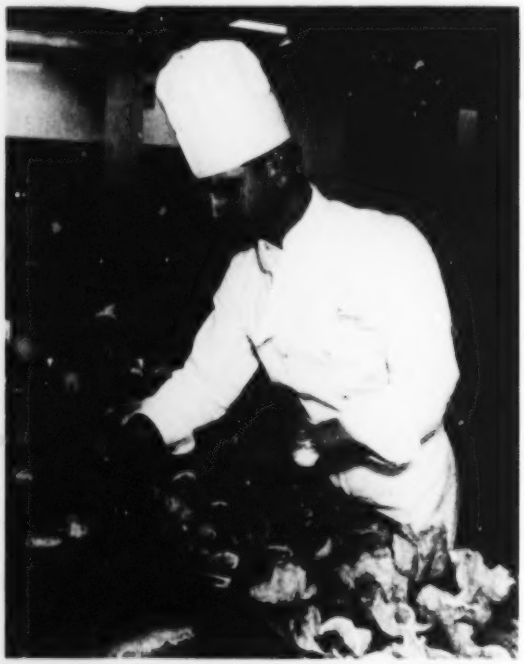
Tasmania's Technical and Further Education system offers an enormous number and diversity of programs. They range from those covering trade, technical and para-professional skills, to an extensive network of adult education courses.

TAFE operates colleges in Hobart, Launceston, Burnie, Devonport and Queenstown. Students from Burnie Technical College, on Tasmania's north-west coast, designed the experimental vehicle pictured below.

Graduates of TAFE's Tasmanian College of Hospitality, Drysdale House, are much sought after by restaurants and hotels.



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The concept of senior secondary colleges was pioneered by Tasmania in the 1960s. The colleges are now well established, with wide curriculum offerings, flexible, student-oriented timetables, programs of day and evening classes, and considerable community involvement. Tasmania's educational expertise in this field is being increasingly recognised throughout Australia, and advice is sought by other states.

Senior secondary services are being further extended with the opening of Claremont Education Park, and other similar facilities will follow.

These unique institutions provide traditional senior secondary courses, together with extended skills development and training for people in business and industry. They place special emphasis on technology, practical skills, and qualitites of enterprise and innovation.

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TASMANIA– EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION

Living in Tasmania is a quality experience in itself. Underpinning this experience is the quality of education in this island state, where innovation, care, concern and understanding combine to build a bright and secure future for our young people.

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